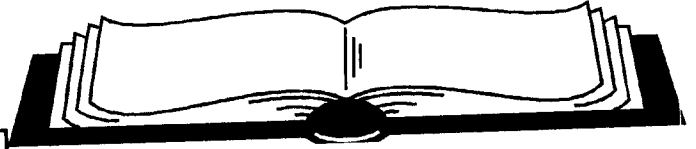


## NEW JERSEY

1999-2000  
Guidelines and  
Application

RECEIVED

NOV 22 1999

N.J. DEPT. OF EDUCATION  
WARREN COUNTY OFFICE

ORIGINAL

## BEST PRACTICES

Deadline for Application to County Office:  
NOVEMBER 22, 1999

Category	<u>Social Studies</u>			(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>Rockin' Regions</u>			
Number of Schools with Practice	<u>1</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)		
County	<u>Warren</u>			School District
District (Proper Name)	<u>Hackettstown</u>			
District Address	<u>315 Washington St.</u>			
	<u>Hackettstown</u>			<u>07840</u>
	<u>city</u>			<u>zip code</u>
District Telephone	<u>908-850-6500</u>	Fax	<u>908-850-4985</u>	E-mail: <u>rlamonte@hackettstown.org</u>
Chief School Administrator	<u>Dr. Rosalie Lamonte</u>			
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	<u>Hackettstown Middle School</u>			
School Address	<u>500 Washington St.</u>			
	<u>Hackettstown</u>			<u>07840</u>
	<u>city</u>			<u>zip code</u>
School Telephone	<u>908-852-8554</u>	Fax	<u>908-850-6544</u>	E-mail: <u>dosmun@hackettstown.org</u>
School Principal	<u>David S. Osmun</u>			
Program Developer(s)	<u>Kimberly Andrusin, Susan Brezina, JoAnn Castellano, Debra Tuxhorn, Cylvia Ultz</u>			
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<u>Rosalie J. Lamonte</u>			

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: ☒ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# BEST PRACTICES 1999-2000 APPLICATION

## Application Requirements:

**RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS.** No reference should be made to the names of the district or the school(s). Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements.

**USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable) and 4 and THE NUMBER OF LINES SPECIFIED FOR RESPONSES to the statements.** Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.

Application must be keyboarded on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Ten-point or larger computer font or twelve-pitch or larger typewriter font must be used. (This sentence is in ten-point.)

**KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to the statements below must be no more than a total of three pages. Keyboard the statement followed by the response. Format your response to the number of lines specified.

The information on page 4 and the keyboarded responses to statements must be printed or copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be printed or copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) and 4 and the keyboarded responses together.

The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.

The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by November 22, 1999, with the Itemized List of District Applications form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION MAY RESULT IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE APPLICATION..**

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name <u>Rockin' Regions</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 - 8	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Number of Schools with Practice <u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> High School	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Number of Districts with Practice <u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual Education and Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support/Guidance and Counseling Programs (services contributing to high student achievement.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement (family involvement and partnerships with business, community and/or higher education.)	<input type="checkbox"/> World Languages

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated. **(Maximum of 50 lines for response)**
2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the *Core Curriculum Content* including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards\** addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s). **(Maximum of 50 lines for response)**
3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. **(Maximum of 60 lines for response)**

\*The May 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>

## Best Practices Application

**1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated.**

Ms. Frizzle eat your heart out! This 5<sup>th</sup> grade team doesn't need any Magic School Bus for a phenomenal field trip. These students take a whirlwind tour through our magnificent U.S. without ever leaving their school. Now that is innovation! How do they do this, you ask? Read on!

*Rockin' Regions Day* is the culminating activity celebrating the finale of our *Rockin' Regions* interdisciplinary unit. Within this unit, the students are exposed to the geography of the United States through the use of *National Geographic* videos, student textbooks and ancillary materials, as well as the use of technology and the Internet. The students move from a more concrete approach to learning, and begin applying and synthesizing their newly gained knowledge. This practice follows Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of education, thus promoting high student achievement. The students begin to apply and synthesize this recently gained knowledge by working in cooperative groups to create projects that demonstrate their understanding of the regions in creative ways. Jingles are written and sung about the regions. Postcards are illustrated, written and "sent," placemats and make-believe meals native to the regions are created and shared.

After the fifth graders complete their study of the five regions of the United States, as well as the five themes of Geography: Location, Description of Place, Human Environment Interaction, Movement, and Regions, the students "travel" through the five regions on an in-school field trip. The fifth grade hallway becomes I-95, I-80, and Rte. 66. Each classroom is transformed into a region of the U.S., and the teachers become the tour guides. Dressed in regional garb, the teachers lead the students through their destinations, stamping tickets as the children move to their next area of exploration. As the students "travel" through the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest and West, they listen to authentic regional music, and participate in activities geared to a further understanding of the diversity in our United States. Activities include "panning for gold," and learning how to lasso. These travelers also partake in local cuisine native to the particular regions. Peaches are prepared, cheese is cherished, and salsa is slurped. When the school day ends, the students leave with tummies filled, toting home hand-made souvenirs from their tour of the five regions of the United States.

Every school is perfectly set up to recreate this exciting unit and celebration. Classrooms are just waiting to become something more than they are. Can't you hear them crying out: "I can BE the Southeast United States!" This interdisciplinary unit uses many disciplines to make it successful. *Rockin' Regions* promotes the idea of teaming within the grade level. Any grade level in any school district could incorporate these ideas into its curriculum to replicate this practice by following the instructions in the "Best Practices" report.

Following these larger goals, the fifth grade team creates objectives to ensure the best possible learning environment for the students.

Students will:

- identify the Five Themes of Geography as they relate to the five regions of the U.S.;
- describe the five regions and their subsections;
- demonstrate an appreciation of the unique characteristics and diversity of each region.

Objectives:	name the states in the regions	follow directions
	use outlining skills	organize binder with table of contents
	use notetaking skills	create placemats, jingles, postcards & bumper sticker
	research material	use mapping skills
	read orally from texts	investigate characteristics of the regions
	speak publicly	write letters
	restate questions in answers	participate in group discussions of travel experiences
	create decorations for regions	practice social skills
	view videos with a purpose	work in cooperative groups.

**2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the *Core Curriculum Content* including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s).**

The fifth grade students in our middle school are heterogeneously grouped for social studies. These levels include English as a Second Language students, basic skills/Title I students, gifted and special education students as well as students of average ability.

#### ***Workplace Readiness Standards***

##### ***Standard #2 - All students will use information, technology, and other tools:***

The students are transported by *National Geographic* videos to each region of the U.S. Discussion ensues from these videos, and this newly gleaned knowledge is used in classroom projects. Travel magazines are put to work, providing "photographs" on postcards that the students design for their assigned regions. The computer is used to word process jingles which students create and sing to entice people to visit the regions.

##### ***Standard #3 - All students will use critical thinking, decision-making, and problem solving skills:***

Throughout this *Rockin' Regions* unit, the students are asked to answer "Thinking Skills" questions using their text and a variety of ancillary materials as resources. Prior to *Rockin' Regions Day*, the students work in cooperative groups to create projects, applying information learned from the unit. The students must decide who in the group will complete each project, and then solve the problem of how to get the individual jobs done.

##### ***Standard #4 - All students will demonstrate self-management skills:***

Each student is responsible for keeping every completed paper during this unit in his/her binder. Each page is numbered, and put in a table of contents at the beginning of the social studies section. Students are expected to be responsible with efficient timing in the completion of their cooperative group projects. Also, on *Rockin' Regions Day*, students "travel" through the regions with students from the other fifth grade classes, and complete projects within the classes in a given amount of time. Students are required to manage their behavior during their "visits to the regions," as well as during their "travel" time.

#### ***Social Studies Core Curriculum Standards***

##### ***6.7 All students will acquire geographical understanding by studying the world in spatial terms:***

##### ***6.8 All students will acquire geographical understanding by studying human systems in geography:***

##### ***6.9 All students will acquire geographical understanding by studying the environment and society:***

These standards are addressed by creating regional maps, both concrete maps--with coloring and labeling of each region and state--and mental maps in which students are able to place themselves in these United States. By transforming our fifth grade hallway into the United States, the students are better able to understand how the United States spatially fits together. The students create postcards with regional pictures on the front and detailed information on the back, describing what they "saw" in the environment of their region. Bumper Stickers are created using catchy phrases particular to the regions. Regional meals are created on "placemats" for which students research the region's society and environment for inspiration. Apples are eaten in the Northeast. Popcorn is eaten in the Midwest. Salsa and chips are enjoyed in the Southwest. Peanuts and oranges are munched in the Southeast, and grapes are eaten in the West. Conestoga wagons are created in the West region to show how people moved from the East to the West in history, and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich assembly line is developed in the Midwest to show how people in the automobile industry build the cars that we drive. Mardi Gras masks are created in the Southeast region, acorn-toothpick boats are built in the Northeast, and in the Southwest, "hot-air balloons" are constructed to simulate a large balloon festival celebrated in New Mexico.

#### ***Language Arts Core Curriculum Standards***

##### ***3.1 All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences in a variety of contexts:***

##### ***3.3 All students will compose texts that are diverse in content and form for different audiences and for real and varied purposes:***

##### ***3.4 All students will read, listen to, view, and respond to a diversity of materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis:***

The students meet these standards by using research information to write jingles about their regions. These jingles are then sung in front of the entire fifth grade. The students write postcards to other fifth graders to tell them about their "travels" to the regions of the U.S. During the unit, the students use their texts as research tools, and view the *National Geographic* videos with the purpose of gleaning information to aid in their analysis of the regions of the United States.

**3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met.**

Throughout this unit, both authentic and traditional measures of assessment are used to evaluate the students' learning. The intention of the fifth grade team of teachers is to find ways that all children can learn. Therefore, it is most important to find ways to best assess all children. Using a variety of assessment tools means that all students, at some point, will be assessed in the best way for them, thus creating an atmosphere of trust between the students and the teachers.

While the students are reading the information about the regions in the textbook, quizzes are periodically given. The students are required to answer the questions at the end of each lesson using complete sentences and restated questions. Students complete outlines on each lesson of the chapter, and are monitored closely in this process. At the end of the regions chapter, a traditional test is given to discover the information which the students have retained.

The students are required to keep their regions unit notebook in an orderly and chronological fashion. A table of contents is created, and as the students complete their notes, worksheets, homework, etc., these are all added to the table to help keep the notebook organized. At the end of this unit, the students are graded on how well the notebook was kept.

The students work in cooperative groups to create their projects/decorations for *Rockin' Regions Day*. These groups are assessed on a rubric for how well they worked together. The students also evaluate themselves to reflect on their own cooperative skills, if they worked well together, as well as where improvement is needed. In addition, these rubrics are used to assess the students' projects. Categories are listed which pertain to the projects, and the students are given a number ranking in the different areas based on the effort put into the project.

Observations of the students play an important role in the assessment of this unit, especially at the end as *Rockin' Regions Day* is approaching. As the students work in their cooperative groups, it is imperative that the teachers monitor behavior, and ensure that the students are being productive. This is also a perfect time to focus on what the individual students know about their regions, by observing how much the individual is contributing to the group projects.

*Rockin' Regions Day* is an exciting celebration of the students' hard work and learning in this region unit. The students enjoy the movement of "traveling" with friends from one region to another. Because of the background knowledge gained during the unit, the students can be successful at completing the necessary activities for each region. Eating the foods is a wonderful way to enjoy the ambiance of the different environments, along with listening to regional music. This event truly shows the students that learning can be fun, and should be something that provides lifelong enjoyment for everyone.